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## Reagan Says Support for the Contras Must Go Beyond 'Band-Aids'

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 18 — President Reagan said today that the United States must do more to assist the Nicaraguan rebels, saying they could not fight the Government in Managua with "Band-Aids and mosquito nets."

Marking the start of a campaign to secure military financing for the rebels, Mr. Reagan said Congress must lift restrictions that prohibit such assistance and must increase nonlethal aid to the rebels.

Mr. Reagan's remarks, at the start of a meeting with Republican Congressional leaders, came as Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, asserted that Nicaragua had recently received a "massive influx" of sophisticated weapons from the Soviet Union and Cuba. He said the weapons had caused "quite a toll in dead and wounded."

### 'We Have to Do More'

In his statement, the President said: "The program approved last year, the \$27 million in humanitarian assistance, has helped to maintain the pressure of the resistance on the Sandinistas. The resistance has continued to grow and is operating deep inside Nicaragua. But we have to do more to help them. As I've said before, you can't fight attack helicopters piloted by Cubans with Band-Aids and mosquito nets."

Manuel Cordero, the deputy chief of the Nicaraguan Mission in Washington, termed Mr. Reagan's decision to seek additional aid "unfortunate" and asserted that the request would bring the United States "closer to a military confrontation with Nicaragua."

In response to the Administration's assertion about an increase in weapon supplies to Nicaragua, Mr. Cordero said Nicaragua had "acquired the means to defend ourselves from aggression" and was trying to bolster its defenses "against the increasing threat of military intervention that will come from the United States."

Although Mr. Reagan declined to detail the proposal for additional assistance to the rebels, officials said the President would probably seek about \$70 million in military aid and \$30 million in nonlethal aid, such as food, medical care and uniforms.

In addition, the officials said, \$3 million will be earmarked to meet Congressional concerns about human rights abuses by the insurgents. It is not clear how the money would be spent to achieve that goal.

The request, which officials said would be sent to Congress in the next two weeks, will seek the removal of restrictions that prohibit the use of American assistance for weapons and for other military purposes. The Administration will also seek to lift a prohibition against direct involvement by the Central Intelligence Agency in the Nicaraguan conflict.

Last year, Congress rejected funding for the guerrillas that was to be administered by the C.I.A. Instead, it mandated that the nonlethal aid be administered through a newly created office in the State Department.

Administration officials said the removal of such restrictions would allow

covert aid that could be more effectively administered. At the same time, they said, it would help to ease the concerns of Honduran officials, who are sensitive about the public nature of the current aid program because they provide bases for rebels trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan Government.

Nonlethal assistance will continue to be provided in an overt manner, the officials added.

### Support in Congress

Several leading members of Congress, including Senator Richard G. Lugar, the Indiana Republican who heads the Foreign Relations Committee, said after meeting with Mr. Reagan that they supported the request.

But Representative Robert H. Michel of Illinois, the House Republican leader, said the proposal could encounter difficulty in the House because of what he called a Nicaraguan "disinformation" campaign.

In a related development, Administration officials said today that Mr. Reagan had indicated to regional leaders that the Administration would be willing to hold talks with Nicaragua if the Sandinistas agreed to simultaneous discussions with the rebels.